

# 'Playing a Part in the Performance' of a Child's X-ray Procedure

Holly Saron,<sup>1</sup> Prof Lucy Bray,<sup>1</sup> Prof Bernie Carter,<sup>1</sup> Dr Catherine Wilkinson<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Edge Hill University <sup>2</sup> Liverpool John Moores University

## Background- Setting the Scene

There is increasing evidence and understanding of children's engagement in and experiences of certain health services and interactions. Little is known about how children communicate during or experience a non-urgent X-ray procedure.

**Research aim:** This PhD study aims explore the communication that occurs during a child's non-urgent X-ray procedure and examine children and their parent's perceptions of this communication and the procedure.

## Methods

- This study used a qualitative Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) methodology.
- Observations of children aged 4-11 years old undergoing a plain X-ray
- Interviews with children after their X-ray using an activity booklet informed by PPI with a CYP hospital group
- Interviews with parents either face-to-face or via the telephone

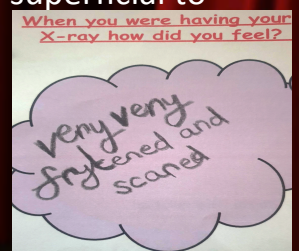
## Key Messages from the Findings

**Forty-five X-ray procedures were observed and 17 children and 9 parents were interviewed. Data were considered in line with ideas around performance and dramaturgy (Goffman, 1959).**

**Roles:** Children, parents and radiographers all adopted and played specific roles during the X-ray procedure. When children were facilitated and chose to have a central role they were more often heard and their choices and opinions listened to. However, some children seemed to be 'extras' at their own procedures and had very little influence on what happened.

**Scripts:** This research has shown that children valued authentic and often improvised conversation about their needs. Over rehearsed scripts sometimes felt superficial to children.

**Stages:** Children said that they sometimes disguised how they were feeling during the procedure in order to be seen as "brave" and "good" and felt they could not always express how they really felt (front stage versus back stage).



## The Curtain Call- The Conclusion

- Children value being engaged in meaningful communication
- Dramaturgical metaphors can help provide new insight into the social interactions that occur during a child's procedure
- The roles parents and radiographers play and how they communicate with children can constrain or enable a child's opportunity to play a meaningful role in their own procedure